

## You're Far for Now but not Forever by NeroAnne

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**Summary:**

A big announcement brings Jonathan back home to Steve.

## **You're Far for Now but not Forever**

### **Author's Note:**

Day 1: Raise Your Glasses!

\*This day focuses on special occasions and celebratory events in the lives of Steve and Jonathan. From birthdays, graduation, anniversaries, and even marriage, this day is about momentous occasions in the boys' lives!

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His soft snores echoed around the small office. It was quiet today, the phone hadn't rung a single time and it was already early noon, so why not take advantage? His legs were crossed at the ankle, the heavy black boots perched on top of the shiny desk littered with several notes, pens, and a disposable coffee cup or two.

Flo hadn't come in yet, which was odd since the woman was usually the first one to arrive. He let himself in and did his usual routine of following up on any leads but there was nothing new. The morning had been uneventful. Completely fucking boring.

*THWAP*

The sound of something smacking onto his desk woke Steve up from his afternoon nap. He nearly toppled backwards from his chair as he struggled to lower his legs from said desk, and he grumbled in annoyance, flipping the brim of his hat above his forehead so that he could rub the sleep away from his eyes.

"Damn it, Flo, did you have to--"

"Open your eyes, Harrington."

Steve blinked his eyes open at the low grunt. He stared up into the man's unamused frown and he smiled sheepishly, reaching out to rub the back of his neck. "Heh. Sorry, chief. I figured you weren't going to be in today." He pulled his hat off, tossing it onto this desk and

running his fingers through his thick hair.

Hopper snorted, crossing his arms as he stared down at his newest officer. "I'm not giving you enough work? You have time to sleep on the job?" he stared down at Steve's work space, wrinkling his nose.

"Oh, bite me," Steve groaned, "You know as well as I do that you give me all the scrub work. I'm so bored of going down to Patsy's just to drive away those damn raccoons from her garbage cans. Or going over to Walter's just so that I can tell Jimmy Harris to keep away from his bench, which, by the way, is ridiculous. Walter should just have it removed if he doesn't want people sitting on it."

"Harrington, shut up," Hopper pointed to the papers, "since you seem to have all the free time in the world, alphabetize these reports and put them away in the cabinet."

"Isn't that Flo's job?" Steve asked, getting up anyway, stretching languidly and ignoring Hopper's evil eye.

"She's in Bloomington for her kid's graduation. Get to it." Hopper said as he turned to leave.

Steve sighed, looking down at the high stack of papers with a pout. He did a double-take, staring at the a letter that was at the very top of the pile. "No way!" he snatched it, ripping it open with an excited grin. He read through the letter quickly and then let out a laugh, looking up at Hopper.

The man chuckled as he leaned against the wall, shoving his hands into the pockets of his uniform, "Figured you'd react that way." His eyes were warm as he stared at the letter, his smile unusually soft. "Two weeks from today. It'll be small, just the family in some old church Karen picked out."

"About time!" Steve said, grinning, "You've been engaged forever now!"

"Two years," Hopper corrected, snorting, "I've been with her for five years, engaged for two."

"Whatever," Steve waved a hand around, smiling down at the little

picture of Joyce Byers and Hopper. They were both smiling, holding hands and staring directly at the camera. It was a very nice picture; Steve knew instantly who took it. A wedding date, time, and location were written in fancy cursive, a nice wine-colored text that paired well with the stark white of the invitation.

“Eleven and Max are going to be flower girls.”

Steve blinked, “You got Max to agree to be in a dress?” The thought of the tomboyish sixteen year old girl rolling around on her skateboard in a dress was interesting. He was pretty sure the last time someone tried to get her in a dress; she had damn near ripped it trying to get it off.

“Joyce did,” Hopper replied, shrugging, “No idea how but it’s all set up. Nancy’s going to play the organ and the boys are going to be groomsmen...but I need a best man.” He gave Steve a pointed smirk.

“Well, you better *hop* to it. Maybe you can ask-”

“Are you being serious right now, Harrington? You can’t be that dense, you passed your academic training with flying colors.”

Steve blinked. And then his eyes widened.

“Whoa, what?! *Me?*”

“Well, you and I have gotten pretty close since you’ve become my number one officer,” Hopper said easily, smiling at the stunned younger man. “I’ve trained you, you learned. You put up with me better than even Callahan and Powell. And I kind of like you, kid.”

“I’m twenty one years old,” Steve huffed, “I’m not a damn kid, you old man.” But his smile was bright as he stared at his chief. “I...yes,” he laughed, “I will be your best man.”

He began to arrange the papers, making piles around his desk to make it easier on himself as he and Hopper talked about the wedding. Eventually, the older man had wandered over to him and began to help sort out the paperwork.

“Does Joyce even have any women that she’s close enough with to

have as a maid of honor?" Steve placed another paper onto his "A" pile, licking his pointer finger as he leafed through the rest of the reports.

"Well, Karen has pretty much decided for her to be the maid of honor," Hopper muttered, "Will and Jonathan are going to escort her down the aisle and give her away."

The familiar name echoed in Steve's head and he hissed in pain as he accidentally nicked his finger with the corner of a paper, "Ouch, damn it."

"What?"

"Paper cut," Steve whined, showing his wound to Hopper, who was completely unsympathetic as he snorted loudly.

Steve raised his hand, sucking the inside of his pointer finger. "Jonathan is coming home?" he wasn't bleeding at all but sucking the sting away still helped.

"He hasn't told you?" Hopper asked, eyebrows raised. "Sheesh, isn't he your boyfriend of like two years now?"

"Of *four* years," Steve cheeked, slipping his finger away from his lips. "God, I actually haven't talked to him this week. He's got finals and I hate distracting him," he chuckled, "he stayed up half the night talking to me one night last year when he should have been studying and he almost slept through his test."

"You're a terrible influence."

"Shut up," Steve shot back, placing his last paper onto its appropriate pile. "I've left him alone this week but now that I know he's going to be coming home soon, I'm calling him as soon as he's done with his class tonight."

"He's been gone a while, hasn't he? Joyce was telling me about how excited she is to have him home for good after he graduates next semester."

"Haven't seen him since Christmas," Steve said quietly, glancing at

the calendar on the wall behind them. It was July. "This year has been tough on him. Most teachers really lay it on thick during junior year."

"And then senior year is a breeze," Hopper nodded, "I remember." He turned, glancing around the office, "Are you okay here on your own?"

Steve followed his eyes. Callahan and Powell were out on patrol and later they were going to stop by Hawkins Elementary for a school assembly so they would be gone most of the day. He figured he could just go back to sleep once Hopper left.

"Sure," Steve said shrugging. "It's been quite all morning, I'm sure that it'll say-" he clicked his tongue as the phone began to ring, as if on cue. He headed over to it, scooping it up and bringing it to his ear. "Hawkins Police Department, please state the severity of your-" he trailed off, rolling his eyes to the ceiling.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Evans, I'll be right over." Steve hung up the phone, frowning up at Hopper's smirking face. "Harris is sitting on Walter's bench. Again."

Hopper laughed, turning away to head back to his office, "Get to it, Harrington."

Steve groaned, picking up his hat.

There went his afternoon nap.

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Jonathan tapped the end of his highlighter against his lower lip, staring down at the page in front of him. He re-read the paragraph and then glossed the highlighter over a particular sentence that made absolutely no sense to him.

He leaned back against his chair, pulling the book over to his lap. He was so damn sleepy. He thought his lack of sleep was bad back home in Hawkins but University was a whole other level. Loud music from the down the hall, as well as annoyingly loud laughter blasted through the thin walls of his small dorm-room and he rolled his eyes.

Damn students and their stupid little parties.

Jonathan moved to grab his headphones but before he could grasp them, his phone began to ring. He glanced at the clock sitting on his nightstand and grinned, setting his book down and pulling the phone over to his bed. He lay down on his small mattress and picked up the receiver, the chord trailing down the front of his dark green shirt. "Hello?"

*"You're a horrible boyfriend, Byers."* was what he was greeted with and Jonathan swallowed a laugh, staring up at his white ceiling with a wide grin.

"That hurts my feelings," Jonathan said, reaching his hand up to rub his left eye. "But I'll remember that when I come home in two weeks."

The sound of Steve exhaling hard on the other end caused him to smile sadly. He fisted his hand tightly in his pillow, remembering the way the older man smelled. It had been so long...he was close to forgetting.

*"I miss you."*

The soft admission caused Jonathan to sigh quietly, "I miss you too, Steve. It won't be much longer now." They were silent for a while, simply listening to one another breathe. Steve spoke again after a few seconds.

*"How are your classes going?"*

"So far so good," Jonathan murmured, glancing at the book he had left abandoned. "I was in the middle of reading for my final."

*"Shit, I'm sorry, babe. Do you want me to call another time?"*

"No," Jonathan said quickly, "no, don't hang up." he gripped the phone tighter, eyes closing as he listened to Steve's low breathing, "We haven't talked in a little while, I can study later. I just want to hear you...your voice."

*"You like my voice, Byers?"*

Of course he did but that didn't mean that Jonathan couldn't and wouldn't mess with his boyfriend.

"Not one bit," Jonathan replied, voice light and teasing. He heard Steve's soft laugh on the other end he felt his own lips quirk. He missed hearing that laugh in person. At least he would get to hear it soon.

"How's Pancakes?"

*"Still brooding that you're not here to stroke his chin every morning. He doesn't think I do it right."* and Jonathan laughed, thinking of the sleek black cat that he and Steve had found in an alley a year ago.

They had just finished dinner, there was about a week left of Jonathan's break before he had to go back to New York, and they had decided to take a walk before driving back to Steve's house. A small noise had caught Jonathan's attention and he went into the alley to see the little animal crying out.

The poor thing had been just a kitten then, flea-bitten and starving. Jonathan had taken one look at it and dove into the alley after it, but it wasn't necessary. As soon as the cat saw Jonathan, it rushed up to him, cuddling up to his legs.

Steve bitched and moaned the whole time, never having been one for cats, but the way Jonathan and the kitten had both stared up at him with begging eyes had him caving and now Pancakes was a healthy, fleshly cat that liked to sleep at the foot of Steve's bed.

*"So, your mom is finally getting married. Hopper told me you and your brother would be walking her down and guess what? Hopper asked me to be his best man."*

Jonathan couldn't help his smile. Steve sounded so elated to be in such a position, "I had a feeling he would. He talks a lot about you to mom." He stretched one arm behind his head, staring up at his ceiling, "How's the job going?"

*"Thrilling,"* Steve sighed, *"You've no idea how boring it is to do the same thing over and over again."*



Jonathan rolled his eyes, "Don't I?" he thought about his own mundane routine. Lectures, studying, more lectures, some eating, more studying, and occasionally sleeping. But mostly studying and lectures.

The party down the hall raised the volume of their music and Jonathan winced, glaring uselessly at his ceiling. What the hell was that song playing anyway? It sounded like a wind-up toy in a damn blender.

*"Sounds like a fun party. Why not go?"*

Jonathan snorted, "Do you hear the garbage they are playing?"

*"You're such a music snob, babe."* Steve laughed on the other end and Jonathan grinned.

"I just know good music-"

*"Uh huh, because Bowie is God and all that bullshit."*

"I'm not going to start this with you again," Jonathan muttered, closing his eyes. "Has my mom talked to you about the fitting for the tux?"

*"Yeah, actually. I went over after my shift and we agreed that we could do it next week after my shift. Since the brats all are getting their sizes noted too, she figured we should just have the woman come to the house and fit us all. Are you going to do yours over there?"*

"Most likely," Jonathan sighed loudly, "I'll just try and find some place that'll do it around here and if not, I'll work it out."

They talked for an hour and eventually Jonathan knew that he had to hang up. His studying had been put on hold for long enough and he had a final tomorrow afternoon. He sighed softly into the phone.

"Harrington."

*"What, Byers?"* but Steve knew.

"I have to let you go," Jonathan whispered, "I have to study," he

licked his lips, "but I'll see you really soon and I'll call you as soon as I have some free time."

*"You'd better."* There was a pause and then Steve sighed, *"I love you, babe."*

"I love you too, Steve," Jonathan murmured.

And after thanking his boyfriend for wishing him luck on his final tomorrow, Jonathan hung up the phone. He listened to the music from the down the hall and groaned, standing and walking back to his desk.

He sat down; grabbing his earphones and popping open his book.

He was counting down the days to the wedding.

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"How many times did she prick you?" Dustin asked as Steve walked into the living room, his face in a grimace.

"At least six," Steve admitted, frowning as they all laughed, "I thought you were exaggerating but man, she has shaky fingers." He sat down in between Will and Dustin, ruffling their hair.

They'd all been fitted already, some of them having gone in pairs to make it easier on the tailoring woman. Since Max and El were of similar height, they went first, and then Nancy, followed by Mike and Will and then Lucas and Dustin.

Joyce and Karen were in the back of the house, in Joyce's bedroom, currently getting fitted for their dresses but also probably stabbed to death by the woman. Hopper had gone to run an errand but had promised to be back in time for his turn.

"At least she put her glasses on by the time she got to the boys," Max grumbled, her arms crossed as she leaned against the couch in between Eleven's knees as the other girl played with the red hair, "El and I got massacred."

"She's right," El nodded, trying to sneak some braids into the

tomboy's hair, "I think she got me in the same spot twice." She rubbed at her arm with a pout.

"She got me a few times too," Nancy admitted, smiling, "but she's a sweet woman." They chatted amongst themselves, Steve and Nancy going back and forth between his work and her classes, and the teens going on and on about their D&D game.

When Joyce and Karen finally stepped out of the room about fifteen minutes later, pained smiles on their faces, was the exact moment Hopper walked into the living room, a sly grin on his face.

"Has everyone gone?" he asked and he grinned wider at the chorus of "yes" from the crown, "good. That just leaves the two of us." He glanced behind him.

"What do you mean?" Mike asked, eyebrow rising, "You're the only one left."

"Actually," the voice immediately caused Steve's head to pick up, his eyes wide, as Jonathan stepped besides Hopper, a bag over his shoulder and a suitcase rolled up beside him, "She's got to do me also."

He smiled brightly as Joyce squealed, letting his bag slide down his shoulder and catching his mother as she jumped into his arms. She kissed his cheek as she moved back, her eyes bright with tears.

"Byers!" Steve scrambled to stand but was pulled back down by Will, who struggled to get over him. "Hey, wait your turn!"

"He's my brother!" Will cried out, laughing as he and Steve wrestled one another to get off the couch.

El took the opportunity to climb over Max and rush over to Jonathan, "He's *my* brother too!" she exclaimed as she claimed his second hug as her own, throwing her arms around his waist.

Jonathan chuckled, his arms wrapping tight around her slender body. They stood, Jonathan with his arm around El's shoulders as they future siblings watched Will and Steve continue to wrestle. "Who do you think will win?"

“Steve’s bigger,” El grinned, “but Will is faster.”

And the youngest Byers was definitely fast. He slid away from Steve’s snatching hands and burst off of the couch, accidentally jostling Dustin, before moving to tackle his older brother. Eleven wisely stepped out of the way as they brother’s collided, Jonathan’s breath escaping him in a loud “oofh!”

“Did you grow again?” Jonathan grabbed Will’s shoulders, narrowing his eyes down at the grinning teenager, “You’re going to be taller than me at this rate.”

“Taller than a midget,” Steve drawled, pouting as he finally stood from the couch, “take pride, Will.” He fixed his uniform, winking playfully at his boyfriend as he made his way over to him.

“Bite me, Harrington,” Jonathan shot back, reaching his hand out to shove lightly at Steve’s chest. He grinned when Steve immediately grabbed his wrist, pulling him in closer.

“I’d love to.” Steve didn’t waste any more time as he sealed his mouth over Jonathan’s, ignoring the whistles from the annoying brats behind him. It had been too damn long without feeling those lips. He pulled back, his forehead resting on Jonathan’s, “You’re home.”

“Last final was yesterday,” Jonathan murmured, reaching up one hand to play with Steve’s hair, “No reason to stay and every reason to come home.” He smiled, those dimples bright, and Steve couldn’t help but lean down, claiming those beautiful lips again.

“Okay, have your *rated r* reunion later,” Hopper teased as he grabbed Steve by the scruff of the neck and pulled him away from Jonathan. Steve flailed, shooting the older man a frown as he adjusted the collar of his uniform. “Harrington, go patrol.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me!” Steve cried out, “the first night my boyfriend is home and you’re sending me to patrol!?” he crossed his arms, very close to a temper tantrum. “My shift was over hours ago, Hop!”

“Jonathan and I still need to be fitted,” Hopper reminded, a rather

wicked grin on his face, “So I can’t do it. And Callahan and Powell are up to their neck in paperwork. Someone needs to do a drive-around but if you’d rather go back to the office and do the filing, I’m sure Callahan and Powell would love to switch-”

“Fine, damn it,” Steve grumbled. He walked past Hopper, pausing to peck Jonathan on the lips, “Here,” he fished in his pocket, pulling out his keys and removing the ones that opened the front door of his house, “Wait for me.”

“Move it!” Hopper demanded, smiling happily as his best man flipped him off.

Steve snagged his hat from the hook by the door and glanced back.

Those brown eyes were watching him, like he knew they would be, and Steve smiled softly. “I’ll see you soon.”

Jonathan smiled back, his fingers closed tight over the keys, “I’ll be waiting.”

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Jonathan made kissy noises to the cat, placing the food bowl down in front of him. Pancakes rushed up, meowing, and circled his pajama-clad ankles affectionately before digging in to his dinner. Jonathan smiled and stood up, rolling up the sleeves of his shirt and washing his hands at the sink before moving back to the stove to flip the actual pancakes he was preparing.

Steve had been patrolling for about an hour now and Jonathan knew that the older man wouldn’t even bother to stop and get something to eat knowing that he was here waiting for him so Jonathan got to cooking breakfast for dinner, hoping that Steve would be able to get here on time to enjoy the carbs while they were nice and warm-

Familiar arms wrapped around him, a firm chest pressed to his back. As if on autopilot, Jonathan tilted his head as warm lips touched at the exposed skin. “I didn’t hear you come in,” he said softly, setting the frying pan aside.

“You were too busy with Pancakes,” Steve replied, his fingers tapping

against Jonathan's hips.

"I wanted you to eat-"

"I meant your cat," Steve interrupted, placing more butterfly kisses on Jonathan's neck, "You love him more than you love me." And he turned Jonathan around slowly, pouting down at the blonde's playful grin.

"He's so soft and cuddly," Jonathan murmured, his hands sliding up the brown colored shirt. Steve was goddamn hot in the uniform. It fit over his chest snugly, his athletic build only becoming even better with his physical training.

"And I'm not?" Steve lowered his eyes, nose touching Jonathan's briefly, and the blonde smiled lazily, reaching fingers up to trail down that gorgeous jawline.

"No, Harrington. You're not." And Jonathan laughed at the utterly betrayed look on his boyfriend's face. He slid one behind Steve's neck, reaching up to place a kiss on those frowning lips.

He felt the frown melt into a smile and Jonathan slid his tongue out, slowly tracing over Steve's bottom lip but not making any further motion to enter that hot mouth. "Hungry?"

They ate in silence, watching TV. in the living room and leaning against each other on the couch with the black cat curled up on Jonathan's lap. The blonde slid his empty plate and over Steve's, moving to stand up, Pancakes hopping off of his lap to stand on the couch, and take them to the sink but stopped by Steve.

"Here," Steve grabbed the plates; forks balanced on top, and leaned over to set them on the coffee table in front of the television. He eased back onto the couch, pulling Jonathan against his chest. He'd changed into a pair of grey sweatpants, his upper body bare and warm.

They cuddled, simply enjoying one another's presence. Being separated was hard, and it was only getting harder with how fast their future seemed to be edging in on them. His mother was going to

be married in a few days, he would be a senior in just a few short months...and then he could finally come back for good.

“Hop doesn’t want to be away from your mom for the night,” Steve said, smiling softly, “you know. The night before the wedding. He’s not used to being away from the one he loves.” His unspoken *he’s not used to it the way I am* hung in the air and Jonathan sighed.

“Just one more year,” he murmured, head pillowed on Steve’s chest, “and then I’m all yours. Forever.”

They were quiet for a few seconds, Pancakes eventual resting his paws on Jonathan’s hip and kneading into the silky pajamas.

“Do you ever think about it?” Steve asked softly and Jonathan tilted his head.

“Think about what?” he asked, stroking Pancakes’ chin. The cat purred in pleasure, his sleek ears flickering.

“Marriage. Getting married,” Steve murmured, voice low, “to me?”

Jonathan smiled, a bit forlorn, turning his head up to his boyfriend, “Steve...”

“I know,” Steve continued, stroking his thumb over Jonathan’s cheek, “I know that it’s...it’s not possible,” he licked his lips, nervous, “but...you would if we could.” His eyes stared deeply into Jonathan’s, “Wouldn’t you?”

Jonathan swore he could hear both of their hearts beating hard in their chests as they gazed at one another. Steve was afraid of his answer. His eyes were staring at him so intently, so unsure. Jonathan finally moved, shuffling up to press his lips against Steve’s chin.

“In a heartbeat,” he said sincerely, laughing softly at Steve’s elated grin.

“Why do you always make me sweat it out?” Steve complained, even though he was still smiling.

Jonathan smirked, standing slowly. He moved his hands down to the

hem of his shirt, pulling it over his head and tossing it onto Steve's lap, "I like it when you sweat," he leaned over, his lips close to the older man's, "I like it when you sweat *on* me."

Steve smiled wickedly, standing also and grabbing Jonathan's wrist, "Then let's work up a sweat." He looked to the cat on the couch, who was staring up at them with bright golden eyes, "Stay here, Pancakes!"

And Jonathan laughed even as Steve tugged him towards the stairs.

He was so happy to be *home*.

--

"I love it when you wear your glasses."

Steve smiled crookedly, fixing the frames on his face, "Dustin says I look like a nerd." He shared the large mirror with his lover, looking down at the blonde from beneath the circular lenses.

Jonathan's lips quirked as he fixed his hair in the mirror, sweeping aside his fringe with just a bit of mousse. He hated putting any sort of product in his hair, but this was his mother's wedding day and he wanted to look nice. Not that he didn't. His boy was always beautiful.

"Maybe he's just jealous," Jonathan murmured before rolling his eyes, giving up. His hair didn't look bad at all but he was too critical of himself.

"You look so beautiful," Steve murmured, reaching out with his hands to adjust Jonathan's bowtie. He leaned down, pecking those soft lips slowly. He slid his hands down the black lapels and then whined as Jonathan pulled back, his voice breathy as he spoke.

"You can't wrinkle my suit, my mom will kill you." He reached out, buttoning up Steve's own suit jacket, "So handsome."

Steve smiled, his hands reaching down to grab Jonathan's. "You ready?"

"I am," Jonathan smiled back and they looked towards the door



when Will stepped inside.

“You need to be at the altar with Hop,” Will told Steve, grinning, “and you and I have got to get to mom.” He said to his brother.

Steve nodded, winking down at Jonathan, “See you out there, babe.” He quickly walked out of the room, intent on taking his place at Hopper’s side.

The ceremony was wonderful.

Nothing very fancy, as it was just them, but still. Max and Eleven looked beautiful as they walked down the aisle to Nancy’s organ playing, scattering flower petals around. Eleven beamed, her cream colored dress swirling around her knees and even Max was smiling softly, her own dress a few inches above her feet. They came to stand beside Karen, who was already beginning to tear.

The boys were all gathered around Hopper, with Steve right beside him. He cracked a joke to his tense boss and friend, smiling as it got the deserved grin, and then he schooled his face as Nancy began to play the bride in.

Joyce stood in between her sons, her lovely face painted lightly and her dress a very soft pale lilac color. She had her arms linked in between her boy’s, her hands clasping her delicate bouquet tightly.

Jonathan and Will were smiling as they walked her, both of them whispering softly to her as they came up to the altar. When asked who would be giving Joyce away, Jonathan and Will both spoke, and kissed their mother on the cheek, stepping to her side as she came to stand in front of Hopper.

Steve listened to Hopper’s vows and his eyes drifted to Jonathan. They shared a tender smile and Steve mouthed his own words of endearment, delighting in the way Jonathan absolutely glowed.

It would be them one day.

Steve was sure.

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**Author's Note:**

Sheesh, this barely fit the criteria lol. I had a whole other idea planned out but I think I saved my best fics for Stonathan later on in the week so tune in tomorrow!